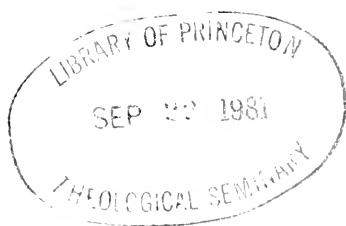


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THE FINAL APPEAL IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. GEORGE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH,
SOUTHWARK,

ON SUNDAY, THE 17TH OF MARCH, 1850,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. N. WISEMAN,

BISHOP OF MELIPOTAMUS, V. A. L.

LONDON:
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON.

A SERMON,

&c.

“MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.”

JOHN xviii. 36.

On this day, my dear Brethren, on which the Church commences her solemn commemoration of our blessed Redeemer's Passion, I would gladly have addressed myself to that most tender and most profitable subject. I should have been glad to introduce you into the sorrowful commencement of our Passion-tide; but there are times when it may appear as though the very finger of God, through the workings of His Providence, points out to us themes which it would be a neglect of duty to pass by, in those more particularly whose office it is to endeavour to direct the thoughts and judgments of those committed to their charge, so as to suggest to them what they should fear, what they should hope, and, what is of far more importance to us, for what they should pray.

You are all aware that within these few days there has occurred an event calculated, according to the opinion of all men, in a most important, and, perhaps to us, in a most consoling way, to affect the

state of Religion in this country, and, more particularly the position of that Establishment, which, under the name of the Church of England, is most especially connected with the religious and spiritual destinies of the great mass of the people. You are aware, in fact,—for I know well what has brought you hither in such multitudes,—you are aware, that I am about to speak to you clearly and definitely, according to my humble but sincere judgment, respecting a late most important decision, which affects necessarily the doctrines as well as the position of that Body to which I have alluded; a decision which I know not how I can better characterise, than by saying, that it suggests to me, and I am sure it has suggested to many, the thought,—“Is this the Kingdom of God? Is this the Kingdom of Christ, which is not of *this* world? Is that which has been so judged by powers which at once strike us as of earth, earthly, the Kingdom that owns no mastership, no authority here below, that cannot be transmitted through the ordinary channels by which earthly rule is handed down? *Can* this be the Kingdom of Christ, which is not in any way a *Kingdom of this world?*” Such, my Brethren, is truly, then, my intention. Much that I shall have to say to you will bear the form of an historical sketch; because it is necessary to have clear principles respecting the mode in which the Church has ever upheld her authority, in order to come to a just judgment respecting that decision which holds the minds of so many, trembling, at this moment, in the balance; scarcely knowing whether it may not

prove a final and fatal judgment with regard to that ecclesiastic Polity which it mainly affects.

When our blessed Redeemer, at this season upon which we are entering, was pleased to deliver himself into the hands of sinners, he allowed himself to be led from tribunal to tribunal, from judge to judge, but recognising not the authority of any of them in his regard, he simply *refused to plead*. When it was necessary to assert his Divine authority; when he was asked, if he was “The Christ, the Son of the living God;” when he was questioned respecting his Kingdom; *he answered*: because he was bound to avow that very principle, on which he refused to answer else. But when they began to question him respecting his disciples and the doctrine that he had taught, then Jesus simply *held his peace*. He was judicially questioned by Annas and Caiphas; he was authoritatively interrogated by the Jewish President; he was mockingly arraigned before the king of his people; and yet to one and all he *refused to plead*. He bowed his head to their buffets; He bent his back to their scourges; He stretched forth his hands upon their Cross; He laid bare his heart to their lance; He suffered every penalty, every consequence; though by a word he might have escaped them.

And when that heart was thus laid open, there came forth from it a mysterious flow.—The Adam of the new Covenant was cast into the sleep of God, and forth from his side went forth his Bride, the Eve of the new Law—the Church of God;—she came forth, as is beautifully and by a singular concur-

rence expressed by the two greatest Doctors of the Greek and Latin Church, placed before us but two days ago by the Church in her office,—she came forth under the purest Sacramental type, in that Water which regenerates unto eternal life, in that Blood which nourishes and quickens unto everlasting glory.

The Church, then, was at once the Spouse and yet the Child of Christ—born upon Calvary, the bed upon which she received her birth, was the Cross, where the throes of the Divine Heart gave her her first existence. She came forth as the child of persecution, as the child of suffering; and she commenced at once her career of struggle, and of ceaseless wrestling, with the Powers of earth.

It is easy to observe, my dear Brethren, by what natural transitions the very Word of God leads us gradually, in the History of the Church, away from Jerusalem, where it first sprung; guiding us as though by the thread of its history, in the life and actions of Saint Paul. We follow him step by step, from, and back to, Judea, till his final departure; when, shaking off from his feet the dust of that now outcast city, he makes his way through Asia and Greece, until at length he reaches, what is clearly to be the final term of his Apostleship, the Imperial city of Rome; where he either meets, or is soon joined by, the other, the greatest, the chief Head of the Apostles, the Head of the Church under Christ, Saint Peter, the first Bishop and Pope of that See.

In Ecclesiastical history, how soon we turn our

thoughts from the one, to fix them upon the other! Those infatuated men whose hands tore up the pavement of Jerusalem, to cast its stones upon Stephen, began the destruction of that city, to be accomplished by the army of Titus, so that not a stone was left upon a stone. But while there the work of demolition was going forward, there was being built up elsewhere a solid and an enduring Temple. In the catacombs of Rome were its foundations deeply laid, upon that Rock which cannot fail, cemented day by day with the blood of martyrs: until in the course of a short time, Jerusalem may be said to have become as only the reliquary of the Church, in which were enshrined noble and most holy things, but things that were past; while Rome became its Tabernacle, in which, as in its centre, reposed the very Life of the Church's life, the very Soul of her soul. If, then, in Jerusalem the Church was born, to Rome she was brought to be weaned. Yes, this infant Church was brought thither into the very face of the Emperors, to the very foot of their throne; not that she might be nursed in the Imperial purple, not that the Pastoral staff of her authority should be forged from the sceptre of monarchs, but that face to face she might confront them: and that she might establish the principle, that she belonged not to them nor to this earth, and that her position was antagonistic with that of the powers of the world.

During 300 years she remained in this state; and during those 300 years, let it be borne in mind, her form, her constitution, her canons, her whole structure, were essentially and completely formed. She

might indeed afterwards attain a greater and more magnificent growth. It was reserved to her, that her branches should stretch forth to the very bounds of earth ; *that* was still to come ; that upon them should be everywhere blossom flowers rich and beautiful, of every varied virtue ; that she should be laden too, with those abundant fruits of holiness, which her various institutions, ripening age by age, have bestowed upon mankind. But her root was firm, planted securely in the ground, it had taken hold of earth ; and her trunk, that centre of her unity, had grown straight, and round, and smooth, and perfect, without knot or crevice, equally impervious to the insinuating flatteries of an approving world, as to the sharpest weapons of its enmity.

The Church, then, was completely constituted, when, after 300 years, we find her coming publicly before the world. She needed to be taught by no one, as to how she had to deal with those matters, and those causes that related to herself. It is not to be supposed that it required the peace of the empire, and the favour of emperors, to enable her to hold her councils, or to promulgate her decrees. Long before that peace had come, long before her Bishops assembled in universal Synods, she had held in various parts of the world, Councils of her Prelates, for the purpose of suppressing errors that had arisen ; for, even in her very cradle, had this mighty Child been assailed by these ruthless serpents : and with her own hand, unaided, she had known how to strangle them, and fling them aside. And so, in the second century, we have councils

held at Rome, and in Gaul, and at Cesarea, in Palestine. In the third century we have them again at Rome, at Alexandria, at Antioch, Iconium, and more than once at Carthage. In the fourth century, before the general Council of Nicæa had assembled, there had been held provincial synods at ten different places. The Church's system, then, of ruling and defining, in matters of Faith, was antecedent to all connection with imperial, or with royal power. Her connection, in fact, with that power was purely accidental. She had been sufficient for herself, and for all her wants for 300 years, without it. She would have persevered to the end, had it so pleased Divine Providence, in the same condition. When that power became favourable to her, she took advantage of it, and naturally enlisted it in the good cause. She accepted it in the same way as she took the basilicas which had been heathen temples, and converted them into churches. She took it as she took the limits of provinces, according to the imperial or civil division, as the most simple and most natural mode of dividing her own spiritual territories. She took it, in fine, as she took the measures of Horace's lascivious Odes, and attuned to them the sweetest hymns of her worship. It was part of her destiny, or rather it was part of her gift, to be able to seize on all that earth might place within her reach, and to sanctify it and to turn it to holiest purposes. Had she found a Republic, instead of an Empire, she would have known as well how to demean herself, and how at once to assert her own rightful independence, and yet to show the de-

ference ever due to every rightly constituted authority, in what regards its own sphere of jurisdiction. Then she could not fail but revere and honour that power which made christianity a very part of the civil and social order over which it ruled; she could not but even, in some respects, bow before that crown, of which that iron Nail which had pierced our Saviour's sacred flesh in his passion, was considered the most precious gem. She used, therefore, gladly the power and wealth of the emperors, for the many purposes whereby she was connected with this world. Their decrees added force to her canons; their protection enabled Bishops to travel from distant regions, and safely to meet together.

But, as if to show how purely accidental, how totally unessential to her existence and to her laws was this state of union and alliance with this power, it was permitted that shortly the imperial power should declare itself the protector of the Arians; it became heretical, and the Church remained orthodox and catholic. Instead of its being uninterrupted peace and constant union, harmony of thought and action, between the Church and the empire, on the contrary for many years it was a ceaseless struggle; and, it may be said, that many of the most tremendous heresies which invaded the Church in the centuries that followed the public acknowledgment of christianity, received their patronage, their support, and their sanction from the Imperial seat at Constantinople. One after the other the Arian, the Nestorian, and Eutychian, and later other errors were fostered at the very foot of the imperial throne.

Hence, in the year 656, we have that interesting event, of the resistance of one monk of Constantinople, standing almost alone—the glorious martyr Saint Maximus—in opposition to the whole power of the State, joined unhappily by Bishops who were subservient to that power. But he, though interrogated by the imperial and patriarchal messengers, held fast to that truth; that so long as he remained in communion with the See of Peter, he needed not to heed what might be the behests of the Emperor. And when he appealed from his decision to the Council which had been held at Rome, condemnatory of the doctrine of the single operation in the will of Christ, he was told by the Bishop Theodosius, who had come to question him, that that Council was of no value. “Of no value?” he asked—“wherefore?” “Because,” said the courtly Bishop, “it was summoned without the permission of the Emperor.” The holy monk intrepidly replied, “I have yet to learn that the power of the Emperor is necessary for the Church to meet in Synod, or to make her canons. If it be the Emperor’s orders which give authority to Councils, we ought to receive those held by their orders against the Consubstantiality of the Son, such as those of Tyre, Antioch, Seleucia, and Constantinople...and long after the second of Ephesus under Dioscorus. And why do you not reject the Council which deposed Paul of Samosata, under Pope Dionysius, and Dionysius of Alexandria, presided over by St. Gregory Thaumaturgus? For it was not held by order of the Em-

peror.”* Such was the position of the Church, then, after peace: in a state even still, with regard to faith, of incessant conflict with the civil power, and never for one moment admitting its authority to pronounce upon any matter of doctrine, or of faith.

And thus it continued in subsequent ages. No one can be acquainted with the history of the Middle Ages, without knowing that there were throughout them two powers, sometimes at peace, but almost oftener at war—the Empire and the Papacy. With the Emperor generally were to be found leagued, if not in active alliance, at least in unity of principle, the great sovereigns of Europe. We know how, in our own country, men like Lanfranc, Anselm, Thomas, and Edmund, men, whose names are venerable to this day for their holiness, were the victims, one and each of them, of this conflict. They suffered exile, and even death, when necessary, rather than submit to the usurpation and claims of the State, in regard to the Church. Instead of supremacy having been allowed to the civil rule, it must be granted that in questions, not always and not so much perhaps of faith, but regarding the rights of the Church, her benefices, investitures, the homage to be done by ecclesiastical persons, and many other similar points—the two were rather antagonistic, than allied, powers. It may be said that in some sort they were like two powers, which are to be found in most kingdoms, the civil and the military. When they go together in good accord, when that which ought to have the disposition and rule,

* Fleury, vol. viii. p. 545, lib. xxxix. No. 17.

can command the energies and vigour of the other, then all is peace—all is tranquil and happy; but so soon as that which should act in dependance on the principles of the other, takes upon itself to command, when the sword pretends to give the law to the nation, then comes misery, and havoc, and ruin; and yet the two powers are necessary for one another, and will seek for reconciliation, and endeavour, if possible, to adjust their claims. And so the Church, which had under its guidance, under its care, through commission of its Head, our Lord Christ Jesus, the spiritual welfare of the world, rulers, and people, whose duty it was to watch over its more sacred and more important interests, was at times in harmony with this other, this civil power, to which had been entrusted the care of material and worldly interests, and whose duty it naturally was to make these subserve to those which were so much greater. At such times all was at peace; because that which should be naturally subject, in regard to moral and religious matters, acknowledged the obedience therein due to the spiritual authority. But when it took upon itself to interfere with matters of religion, with matters of Divine or ecclesiastical right, then came the conflict; because those were not days in which the Church knew how to yield one atom of her inheritance; and she fought the battle; and though often oppressed and trampled under foot, still she rose again, and in the end she ever conquered.

While in every other country in which Religion as it existed then, has been maintained, that same

spirit, that same principle, has equally endured, in this country, perhaps alone, was ever made a clear, a definite, and a deliberate surrender of spiritual power into the hands of the State. It may be said that the work began in tyranny. It did, no doubt; but it was submitted to not merely when under the pressure of the first command, but afterwards, when there had been time for reflection, when there had been time to weigh in the balance the loss of temporal advantages, the protection of the State, its endowments, its pre-eminences; and on the other hand, the spiritual rights and prerogatives of the Church. In the 24th year of the eighth Henry, there was issued the Royal mandate, under the form, indeed, of a Legislative Act, which trenched, for the first time, on the spiritual jurisdiction as it had been for ages established. For, my brethren, putting aside all question of right, and taking it merely as a matter of consideration historically, there can be no doubt that, up to that time, there were appeals from this country to the jurisdiction of the Holy See, that these appeals were real, that they were not merely in theory, but that they were permitted by law—by a Law which recognized it as a part of ecclesiastical right. The Pope was acknowledged as the Head of Christ's Church. England considered itself as a portion of that Church. He was the last, the final appeal in all matters ecclesiastical; and whatever jealousy from time to time may have arisen in the State, it was a recognized right; and if a bishop or a priest was aggrieved, he could appeal, from the last jurisdiction in this

country, directly to the Head of the Church. The first trenching on this authority consisted in the forbidding, under severe penalties, the carrying appeals to this authority, upon certain given points. And yet it would appear, as if in other matters more purely spiritual than those which were enumerated, it was still intended to allow the same power of appeal to the Holy See. But this was shortly followed up by the second tremendous act of separation, by which not only every appeal to the authority of the sovereign Pontiff was made a crime, and subjected the party appealing to grievous penalties; but even that appeal which had been given to the Archbishops and to the Convocation, was repealed, and the King reserved to himself the power of deciding, by a Court of his appointment, in all such cases. Now here is an act—a most clear and decisive legislative act; and that act, though repealed afterwards in the time of Mary, was again re-enacted, confirmed, and made a part of the law of the country in the very first year of Elizabeth; and it so remains to this day—with the modification that has lately taken place.

Now an important question arises here; Was this the act of the Church of England? It *was* the act of the Church of England, by its simple acquiescence; because, if a jurisdiction is established which affects the rights of an individual or of a body, if that individual or that body does not protest, does not say a word to contravene it, still more, if it submits to its decision, it virtually acknowledges the existence of such authority; it sub-

jects itself to it; it cannot refuse to plead against it; and if it allows years, and even centuries to pass, in quiet acquiescence of it, and never exercises any act at variance with it, it must be considered to have subsided into an acceptance of it, even though at the beginning there may have been repugnance. But the second canon of the Church of England, which is acknowledged to be binding upon the clergy, expressly forbids any one to deny to the Queen or to the King that jurisdiction or authority in matters or cases ecclesiastical, which was given to the Crown by the laws of the country, under pain of excommunication *ipso facto*, reserved to the Archbishop alone, who cannot absolve the person that is guilty of it, until he has retracted his opinions.*

Then by this Canon enacted by the Church under such tremendous penalties, the very heaviest which any Church can inflict; because it is not only a censure, it is not only an excommunication incurred *ipso facto*, that is, without any sentence, but it is what is called a reserved case, a reserved excommunication, from which only the Archbishop, not even the Diocesan of the guilty person can absolve

*“Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that the King’s Majesty hath not the same authority in causes ecclesiastical that the Godly Kings had among the Jews, and Christian Emperors of the primitive Church; or *impeach any part of his regal supremacy in the said causes, restored to the crown, and by the laws of this realm therein established*, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the Archbishop, after his repentance, and public revocation of those his wicked errors.”—Can. ij.

him—by this canon, so sanctioned, so sacred, the Church has bound herself to acknowledge the Supremacy, in those terms in which it was bestowed upon the Crown by the civil Law of the country. Now if we go to the Act of Elizabeth, in which the Jurisdiction is so given, it is so explicit, so full, that it seems impossible to find an evasion; for it vests, by authority of Parliament, in the Crown whatever authority, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence, ecclesiastical or spiritual, had ever been held within this realm by any ecclesiastical power or authority, for the visitation and correction of all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses and offences. Then here is the power given, first to the Crown, to decide in causes ecclesiastical. Here is the power given to the extent of any spiritual power ever held in the kingdom; consequently, it is made commensurate with that of the Sovereign Pontiff in catholic times. Here is the power given, not merely with respect to mixed cases, but such as are purely of an ecclesiastical character—schism, error, heresy. And then comes the Canon, which confirms by ecclesiastical authority, under the heaviest penalties, with the strongest sanction, every word of this concession. Then, I ask, is it not the joint act of the State and of the Church, and has not the Church sanctioned completely to its full extent, the whole of what the State had done? Then it seems mere trifling to speak of this not having been the act of the Church, of its having been a mere temporal, a mere legislative enactment; it has been accepted

by that Church, both by tacit acquiescence, and by formal sanction.

It is important, my brethren, that you should bear in mind the words of this Canon. It clearly admits that whatever has been bestowed on the Crown by the Laws of the country in regard to causes ecclesiastical, thereby becomes a just right, inherent in it. As, therefore, it simply enacts that what the Legislature had given in regard to these causes, spiritual and ecclesiastical, to the Crown, is on that account (for it does not enter into the merits of the concession) to be considered as binding, it follows, that if the Legislature makes modifications of this Law, that is, prescribes various modes of acting within the limits of that authority, then that the Church has virtually sanctioned the principle, that such modifications are binding upon itself. When, therefore, by late legislative enactments there was a change made in the form of the tribunal, when certain persons were appointed to judge instead of those who had been before employed, it follows, that as this rests on exactly the same authority as did the former concession, that as these are mere accidentals and accessories to the jurisdiction granted, it can never be pleaded, that because a change of this secondary character has been made in the mode of operation of that previous law, therefore it is something new,—a new usurpation, as it were, of rights, dormant indeed, but still inherent, in the Church. And yet, when apparently for the first time, there has come forth a decision from this authority (for one which had previously been made had been

passed by, almost unnoticed) men seem startled, astonished, that there did exist, lurking somewhere, a power of which they profess to have been ignorant, but which now, having at length acted, having, as it were, fastened itself on the Church, they begin to deliberate upon the important question, what is the nature of its decision—to what extent is it binding—from it is there any appeal? Is this a final sentence, or does there yet remain another which may be invoked? This is indeed the great, the real, and the vital question of the moment.

In what way are those who believe that in the English Church there are inherent rights of jurisdiction, and a power to decide on matters of doctrine, to look upon the decision which has been made? They speak of it as though it were only the opinion of a few persons of no authority in the Church; and some even go so far as to say, that they are entitled to despise it, to set it at nought, on this ground. But let us examine in what way was appeal made to this tribunal? For it was a Court of appeal to which a cause that had been pending in a lower tribunal, and had been there decided, was finally carried. Was it carried up merely as to a higher step of jurisdiction, or was it carried as to a Court of final appeal? Who for a moment can hesitate to decide? It was a Court constituted by law, and they who appealed to it, appealed to it according to the tenor of its constitution. That constitution is, that, when its sentence has been pronounced, this is incapable of further review or revision;—a term which at once pronounces that it is final. Then if a

Bishop of that Church pleads before such a Court, allows his case to be carried to it, he allows it to go thither as in appeal to a jurisdiction which has been pronounced final; and the very act of his so submitting to it, at once gives his sanction to it in that capacity. And those who presided at it, or they rather who were its assessors—they too are Bishops of that Church, nay one its Archbishop, and he sat there and agreed to act as an assessor, and perused the sentence, and gave his assent to it according to the constitution of the Court, as established, and that Court was appointed as a Court of final appeal, beyond which there was no power to carry the enquiry. It is said, however, “Yes, but there was one Bishop who did not assent to the judgment,” and much stress is laid upon this, and expressions of great hope are founded upon it. But he sat upon it, he sat at that tribunal as an assessor, knowing it was constituted a Court of final appeal; and we cannot suppose that persons of such character and station would say, “we will act on that court in accordance with a given law, but at the same time with no intention of recognizing the jurisdiction which that law gives to that Court, nor the right of law to bestow it.” Then the whole nature of the transaction, from the beginning to the end, is such, as stamps it at once with the character of a final act. The appeal was taken to that tribunal as to one which had to pronounce a final and decisive judgment—no appellate jurisdiction remained.

But there has been a fallacy most marked in much of the reasoning which has been put forth upon

this subject. It is said that it is the opinion after all, that it is the judgment of Laymen. It is not so; because, it is needless to repeat, that it is the sentence of the supreme authority, to which in the Church has been awarded the power of deciding in matters of errors, heresy, and schism. It is the Head of the Church—its Chief Governor, that has pronounced the decision; the others have been but her Counsellors to guide her judgment; and her fiat has been spoken under the sanction of the supremacy, which the Church herself has acknowledged, or bestowed upon her.

Again I would ask, who ever heard in Ecclesiastical History, or in Canon Law, of an appeal from the Archiepiscopal Court to any other Court as only intermediate, to some other final appeal? It is said; “there remains still a Convocation. We have still a national council to which we may appeal.” It would be, I think, utterly unheard of and unknown, first of all that there should be an appeal from the Archiepiscopal Court to the civil power (if this was the decision only of the civil power) and that then from that decision another appeal, nowhere provided for, nowhere mentioned, nowhere sanctioned; and which, if it did exist, would be, in fact, without a precedent or authority in Canon Law. For in fact, the appeal to a Convocation or Synod, in a matter which has passed the Archiepiscopal Court, even if direct, would be, I believe, a thing unheard of, in ecclesiastical jurisprudence. It would be like an appeal from the Archbishop to the Archbishop, from his Court to his Synod. And as the very nature of an appeal

requires recourse to a higher power, it will not be found that in this country, or in any other, Synods, which can only be called together by the Archbishop, were made or considered a tribunal of appeal against him, or above him. But the course now imagined, of a passage through a temporal, or lay tribunal, (if the one in question is to be so considered,) from the Archbishop's Court to the last appeal, as though it were an intermediate step, is completely a new figment, unknown in Canon Law, most unconsonant with its principles and practice. Seeing, therefore, that the Queen's Council has been admitted, at all, by the highest purely ecclesiastical authorities in the English Establishment, as a Court of appeal from the ecclesiastical tribunals, it must be held to be the very highest possible jurisdiction, in those matters that are carried to it, and therefore to be final. In fact, the Crown is the only authority recognized as superior to the See of Canterbury, within the realm.

And surely, as things stand now, it must strike us as a most strange inconsistency, that it should be said in many of the publications put forward on the subject, that this is the case of a lay tribunal reversing the judgment, or decision, of the Archbishop in his Court of Arches. Now the principle is here assumed, that, though the bench of that Court itself consists of mere laymen, and though it pronounces its award without even consulting the sentiments of that Archbishop, yet, because it is his tribunal, it speaks with his authority, and its award is to be considered as his decision. Then the same principle would compel us also to say, that no matter who

speaks, who pronounces in the second tribunal, if its sentence emanates from the only superior authority that the Church admits; it is not, as has been said, the State, it is not the Privy Council, it is the supremacy that pronounces here.

But mark a further inconsistency. It is said: "here is an appeal made to laymen from the ecclesiastical Court of the Archbishop—is that to be tolerated?" Strange indeed I say it is that the judgment, deliberately given, of that very Archbishop, should be in conformity with the award of that supposed lay tribunal, and for the reversing of the judgment said to have been pronounced in his own court. Either, therefore, that first decision is to be considered as his, and then we have him pronouncing an opinion, and concurring in a judgment, completely at variance with his own award, and even reversing it; or it is *not* to be considered as his, and then it is but a mockery to say that it proceeded from his tribunal, or that there has been any previous ecclesiastical trial at all. In this case there is perfect parity between the two tribunals, the lower and the higher, and any exception taken to the latter, must equally apply to the former.

In fine, my Brethren, who after all represent the Church? Who are they whom Christ has appointed to watch over the law, over the interests, over the principles of His Church? Is it the sheep, or is it the shepherd? Is it the subject, or is it the ruler? Is it the Clergy—the ministering Clergy of the Church, and the Laity? Or is it the episcopal body, whose duty and office it is to speak the

sentiments of the Church? Now, it is clear that while the clamour that is being made proceeds from those whose duty it is to listen, and to learn, and to obey, and from those whose duty it is to teach others to learn, and to obey; they who naturally must be admitted as the interpreters of the Church's wishes, as the depositories of her true principles, as the most likely to have at heart her best interests, have from the beginning acquiesced in the present law; they were in fact parties to its enactment. They had opportunity of protesting or warning against it, of opposing it, of proposing amendments to it, while it passed through the legislature; yet they never did one of these things. Surely they bear the full responsibility of such an unopposed enactment; and the Church, which acknowledges them as its ecclesiastical and spiritual rulers, is bound by their collective consent, though tacit, as by a collective act. For no other part of the body cried out, or protested against that silent acquiescence.

And further, it must be owned, that it strikes a Catholic as most anomalous, and almost incredible, that persons, the main drift of whose teaching and theological system has been for years, to exalt the rights and powers of their Church, and to urge her rights over men's consciences, should now stand up and declare that they did not know, till this case came forward, of the existence of such a tribunal possessing the power to decide finally in such matters. I would ask you, would you think any Catholic was jesting or in earnest, were he to tell you, it was not till the other day, till he heard of some decision

which had been given, that the Pope was the ultimate appeal in matters of faith, that the Holy See had jurisdiction superior to every other, to pronounce in such causes? Would you not think he must have known very little indeed about his religion, never to have studied, never to have inquired, never to have known, where was the last, the ultimate appeal in matters of such vital importance? And then, if that power instead of being one, beneficent and easily submitted to, as is that of our Supreme Ruler, it has to be considered a dangerous, a hostile, and even a fatal one. Can we conceive that no pains should have been taken by these men to study it, to know it, and to see all its bearings; so to be prepared, when the day of action came, with the course which they were to take, instead of being, as now, perplexed and having as yet to learn what is the next step in their power to take? Can you imagine this, compatible or consistent with anything like a true systematic teaching respecting the authority of the Church?

But this is not all; this is not, my Brethren, a question merely of circumstances, it is a question of principle. It does not matter what the decision has been. Men are alarmed because this Council, or the Sovereign, in accordance with its recommendation, has pronounced respecting a given doctrine—has said that it is indifferent to the Church, whether a person holds one doctrine respecting baptismal regeneration, or the very opposite. But this is nothing. The main principle existed before the tribunal pronounced its award, and for it, it mattered little whether it should

give sentence one way or the other, but the enquiry is, whether such a power could possibly have been allowed to exist, unless it was a part, and an essential part, of the very constitution of that Church. For after all, there are doctrines and principles which belong to the very essence of a system, that may not be touched, may not be interfered with, without its destruction. Can you imagine, for instance, that the catholic religion could lose its faith in the supremacy of Saint Peter and his successors, without its very existence, as that catholic Church, ceasing? Would you not say that if Catholics all over the world deliberately rejected that doctrine, they would no longer be the same Church they were before—nay, that they would no longer possess the very vital principle which holds them together as such? And so of other more mysterious doctrines. Were the Church to surrender her particular belief respecting the Real Presence, there is no doubt she would be so completely changed, as that she would no longer be the same Catholic Church. Then, as the existence of a last appeal is necessary to a Church, and as the authority, holding and exercising it cannot be secondary and accidental, but an essential part of its very constitution, it follows, that if the Crown, after deliberating in Council, pronounces in final appeal of doctrine, this its authority is an essential part of the English Church's polity; the denial of which would destroy the very vitality or essence of that body. But further, if the doctrine of baptismal regeneration be as vital to Anglicanism as that of the real presence is to Catholics, if the denial of that doc-

trine, or its being made indifferent, is a heretical decision, and may even, as has been justly observed, plunge that establishment into (further) heresy, and if the last Court of appeal, provided for itself, and recognized by that Church, is thus one capable of making such an erroneous decision and leading to its disastrous results, it follows that the very essential constitution of that Church is vicious, and at variance, in principle, with the first requirements of a Church. For look at the consequence of the acknowledged state of things: it is that the Church of England has committed itself to a jurisdiction, which it now sees may, in its turn, commit her to heresy. But the vitiating act was not committed when the second step took place, but when she first recognized the authority, that was capable of committing it.

And, my Brethren, the question now arises, if this be not the final appeal, as it clearly seems to me to be, to what will the dissatisfied further appeal? We are told that they will summon a convocation or a national Synod. I have already said that this is not a Court of appeal; but, be it so, how is this to be called together? They, in the Articles, which they have subscribed, have sanctioned, that such councils cannot be called without the authority and jurisdiction of the civil ruler. In other words, it requires an appeal to that very supremacy which it is sought to set aside, to take the very step for removing it. It is only by appeal to the Crown, to allow such Synod to meet, that according to their sworn subscribed principles, they can possibly attempt to put aside its award. Here, then, in the very measure proposed,

they fall back upon that which they are flying from, and they at once recognize that very power under which the last judgment has been pronounced. Then, perhaps, they will meet without its sanction; they will call together a national Synod, without minding what may be the wishes of the Crown, or the dispositions of the State. I will not pursue that thought further. We will watch events. We will see whether in that ecclesiastical Body, whether in that Establishment, there is the vigour and power to act of itself. Not that I should wish to defy them to any such act, I believe simply that it is impossible to them. I believe that it is impossible, because they have themselves so bound themselves on every side, that they cannot, if they would, break the fetters by which they are enchained; and there would be questions to be raised and solved involving such terrible sacrifices, as I am sure they would not dare to face, before these Bishops could be all engaged to join in this one great act, of re-asserting a power which they have themselves now, as their predecessors before had done, renounced, and acknowledged to be vested in another.

But is there then no appeal? Has there never been any appeal beyond this? I have shown you, my Brethren, that there were, in ancient times, appeals to another power, to a spiritual and superior power, acknowledged by the whole Church. To that they cannot appeal: and there has been the great error, that they have cut themselves so completely off from that authority, and that tribunal, to which alone an appeal, in matters of Faith, would lie, that

it is necessary for them to treat this appeal as final, because it leaves them no other direction in which to escape. Yes, my Brethren, in former times, if a matter like this had arisen in one Church, it would not have been left to her, with her own limited resources, to fight the battle with a power that she considered hostile. Nor in those days would such collision have been made, in the same way; because there were laws recognized by the State, as well as by the Church, in regard to the limits of the mutual jurisdictions.

But how is it that England, or rather we will say, that which calls itself her Church, should be now so cut off from the sympathies of the rest of the world? Will she dare to appeal to the Universal Church in which so many of her writers declare, lies the ultimate appeal in matters of Faith? Yes, I admit their words. It is to the Universal Church that the only final appeal can come; whether that Universal Church be represented by her head, or whether she be represented by a General Council, or whether she be represented by all the churches of the Catholic Unity, separated, indeed, in place, but yet speaking with one assent. To that authority, however represented, I own, that the appeal must lie. Then let this Church, let this powerful Church, as no doubt in many ways she is, raise her voice and call upon the Catholic Church throughout the world, to come and bear part with her, and sustain her, in this her intended struggle. Or let her ask all others to join their suffrages to the truth of the doctrine which it is said has been now, for the first time, impugned.

Why does she not do so? Or if she does, will they respond? Is there then no longer any internal union, any bond of love and of charity, that binds her to the rest of the Christian world, so that, upon her cry of distress, it will rise to succour her; and if it may not help, at least to console her and encourage her? Will Gaul send a Saint Germanus or a Saint Lupus once more, as she did when the Pelagian heresy was threatening the faith of this island, to come and instruct men in the truth, and to confute the propagators of that heresy? In former times, when even nearly the whole of the Church seemed to be sinking in a state of hopeless error, one single Bishop, who stood up to fight her battle, did so with confidence and with success; because he knew that he carried with him the prayers and the good wishes, and the ardent aspirations, of his brethren throughout the world. And it was thus that Athanasius stood alone; it was thus that Eusebius baffled the councils of confederate Arians; it was thus that Saint Hilary became the apostle of the orthodox faith, in the very country into which he had been exiled, and returned again in triumph to his own See: because in communion with the Universal Church, they were sustained in their struggle, and they felt, that though around them there might be error and darkness, still beyond the horizon which had closed on their view there were bright and radiant fields, in the Church in which the true faith shone forth still in its glory, and where pastures of eternal life were still spread to the flock of Christ.

Then what is the meaning of this? This Church, which is ever glorying through those who speak as her particular admirers and defenders—this Church, which calls itself a branch of the catholic Church, which considers herself as forming one of the many churches united together under the name of the Universal and catholic Church, is she then so completely alone in her insular existence, as that she can awake no cry? not even a feeling of sympathy and of sisterly affection? Oh! this country can do much to arouse the thoughts and the actions of the whole world. She can send forth her fleets to the very extremities of earth, and her behests are obeyed, and her very name is respected, and kings tremble at the thought of her power. She can send forth a peaceful message over the whole of the world, and it is immediately responded to. You have called together the whole of the nations to come and bring here together, the produce of their skill, and that cry has thrilled through the entire world. You have excited to activity the sluggish inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges;—you have aroused the weakly inhabitants of Thibet, in the luxurious valleys;—and you have inspired new energy and power into men of every caste, and of every race. You have put activity into their brain, and industry into their hands; and the furnaces, and the workshops, and the looms of the world, are at work to bring to your feet, as a tribute to the Queen of the nations, the works of their hands, elaborated with their utmost skill, as if you were the judges and the supreme in all that is great, and noble, and beautiful on earth. And is

there in this country all this wonderful power of commanding the sympathies, and even the activity of men, in regard to what is of this earth; and its Church, which speaks even as if it were the purest branch, the most apostolical of all the Churches of the earth, can she be in distress, can she be, as men speak for her, trampled under foot, can she be on the point of being extinguished, can the most solemn doctrines, of which she has been the depository, be, as it were, slipping from her hand, torn thence by the cruel grasp of her enemies, and does she cry out,—and not one response? The Vatican remains in its solemn silence. That word, which formerly spoken, was echoed in the hearts of the faithful throughout the world, which called for their prayers, and their lively interests in the struggle of a depressed or afflicted Church;—that voice is silent and will not be raised, even though desolation should take place, and this whole fabric of men's hands (for no more is it in our estimation) should crumble to pieces. And even from the neighbouring coasts, to which the very cry of distress may be supposed to reach, there will be sent back no sympathetic or loving reply; but all will be dead in her regard. Save this, that all and every part of the great and glorious Church of Christ, stands, as in awe, to see what will become of that Establishment, which has been raised up to great worldly excellence and magnificence, till it has towered on high, amidst the nations, as a mighty and splendid fabric, which learning and genius, and great individual worth, as well as the loftiest social

position, have conspired to embellish and enrich with every human and earthly advantage. Yes, they are watching to see how this structure is able to resist the shocks, not of the power of man, but of that interior element of dissolution, which seems to have begun its work within her, and to be agitating her to and fro to her destruction. They are looking upon all this as men look upon a great judgment that has come down in mighty power from on High. They are looking at it with that interest which a great crisis naturally excites in things of earth, and only subject to human laws; but the end, the destiny of which, is as yet concealed. These various parts of the living Church of Christ can in fact only look on the agitated Establishment of this country, as men can do from a firm and lofty shore, upon a frail and shattered bark, tossed upon the billows. To save it, and guide it into port, is totally beyond their power: they can only pray for those who are on board, that when it shall break to pieces on the rock, they may be borne, on its fragments, towards the only safe shore, and stand ready, to stretch forth a helping hand to them in that hour. But, as a Church, as a religious body, one which has any claim upon them, they heed it not, they leave it to itself. And thus it is shown, how truly indeed the great principle of unity has been here lost, and once lost, cannot be recovered, save by total change, and return again to the ways that have been departed from. Surely, my Brethren, this ought to make some impression on those who believe, or affect to believe, that the English Church is a living member of the great and

holy Body of Christ's Church. For if it be true doctrine that one member cannot be afflicted or injured, but the others must hasten to comfort and assist it, how is it that the present distress of this religious community does not thrill as a pang through the entire catholic frame? It needs must be that the present sore is but as a gangrene on a palsied and withered limb, which can convey message of the affliction to the centre of life, and all that beats in unison with it.

That principle once lost, of union with the whole Church, of submission to its real power, there remains no hope, except in such resources as mere human skill, and human wisdom may suggest. For no one, my brethren, no one, I believe, of whatever religious principles he may be, whether he belong to that party that exalts the destinies and privileges of the Church, or to that which individualizes the Church to each in himself—no one, of whatever shade of opinions he may be in that Church or out of it, no Catholic, no Protestant, has even for one moment imagined, that in the whole of this discussion, in the trial, in the examination which has been made respecting doctrine, in the sifting of evidence, in the weighing of the authorities on each side, there has been any exercise of the Divine influence, any exertion of Almighty power, any over-ruling of the Spirit of God, any infusion of Grace and of light into the hearts or thoughts, of those who had to treat of such momentous things. It is looked upon as a judgment guided by human principles, based upon mere earthly prudential maxims. The whole has been treated as

a case of ordinary interpretation might be, without thought for a moment of what the spiritual consequences of the decision might be, or in what manner this opinion, or the contrary, might influence men's eternal destiny. This was not the case formerly in regard to matters of faith. Oh! there was most solemn prayer and three days' fasting, before a decision on doctrine was made, even by Bishops assembled from every part of the world. And there was the turning over with solemn thoughts to the writings of the great lights of the ancient Church, and there was much grave and serious discussion, and much deep reflection, before at length the decision came forth;—"It hath seemed right to the Holy Ghost and to us." And thus, and thus alone, were doctrines of faith decided then.

I own, my brethren, it does appear to me as if God had some great view in what has happened. If it has been treated by men here below as a matter of earthly interest, as a decision to be guided by human wisdom, yet it cannot appear to us otherwise than as a providential event in which the wisdom of God has directed the course of things, as it does those of all earthly events, for the advancement of His holy religion, and for the triumph of His true Church. It is impossible not to see what a new element of dissolution has been hereby introduced into the English Church; how those errors which, till now, have been, merely unrecognized differences of opinion, may now take a systematized form. It is impossible not to see how the decision which has been come to on this matter, would be

similarly pronounced upon other doctrines, were they to be brought into the same course of judgment. And one can hardly foresee the extent, to which this may increase that complete division that already exists among, not merely the members, but the rulers of that Church, upon the other of its great admitted Sacraments, and upon the very vital question of Apostolic succession, and the divine rights, even in spirituals, of the rulers of the Church. My Brethren, when these great questions of principle may arise, as I before said, it is not what may actually happen, but it is what has virtually taken place, when the cause has been permitted, that we must attend to. It is not certain that a house will fall immediately, because it is undermined, but the fact of its being so may prepare us for the fall at any moment. And oh! may God,—I hesitate not to say,—hasten the day when reflections such as these shall open the eyes of men, and let them see how uncertain is their foundation; and what a slight shock more may be sufficient to overthrow their presumptions, and to destroy their hopes. And, moreover, I cannot help but feeling still more, that God, here, as on so many other occasions, has been pleased to make use, for His judgments, of those very things wherein men have offended. For we know, how as Tyre gloried in her riches, and in her merchandise, and in her splendour, so therein was she punished; and as the Jews exclaimed, “The Temple of the Lord! the Temple of the Lord!” and in that put their trust, and by means of that tried to delude, and draw men away from the real law of God, therefore that temple

seemed more particularly to attract the judgment of God, and was the more frequently sacked and desecrated, and at length completely destroyed. And how have men been trying to keep others, whose eyes were already unveiled, from joining the true Church? It has been by boasting so much of the sacramental power of their Church. It has been by cautioning them against turning away from what was called the Church of their Baptism, as though Baptism, any more than Christ, could be divided: and one could say, "I am of the English Baptism, and another, "I am of the Roman;" any more than he could say, "I am of Paul," "I am of Cephas," or, "I am of Apollos;" because, as there is but one God, so is there but one Baptism. But as this has been the delusive theory whereby many have been detained in error, and held back from the Church, it seems to me, that God has been pleased to strike those who employ these means, in their very darling thought, and strike, from their hand, the very weapon which they have forged against His kingdom. They cannot in future speak of their Church, as if characterised by its baptism, or as entitled to any allegiance, because of any security which she affords her followers in regard to this vital point. For, from henceforth it must be said, that what was lately considered by many an essential point of her doctrine concerning this Sacrament, has now become in her an *open question*, and therefore no matter of faith. But we, my brethren, we, my Catholic friends and dearly beloved children, we will turn our thoughts another way. It is not to triumph, it is not to

exult over what I believe to be the sorrows and conscientious sufferings of many, that I have addressed you; but it is right that you should be armed on a point like this, which is agitating men's minds. Many will speak to you concerning it; many will endeavour, perhaps, in reasoning with you, to defend the position which they are about to take; and it is well that you should know its fallacy, and be able to show how vain and how foolish are their hopes. For thus at once to cut off so much of the way which they might be determined to traverse, instead of taking the short and direct line at once to the Catholic Church. We, I say, have a different view and a different duty to follow. Ours it will be, with all earnestness of heart, during these days of grace,—during these days when we shall contemplate our blessed Redeemer in the midst of his sufferings, to redouble our prayers, our most earnest supplications, that He will look down with pity and compassion upon the multitudes, whom we believe, nay, whom we know, to be ensnared in the meshes of error and crooked doctrines; and especially that He will pour forth at once the grace of complete and immediate conversion upon those who are wavering, who desire still to cling to this bark that is sinking beneath their feet; but who have not the courage at once generously to throw themselves into the bark of Peter, the only ark in which God is pleased to rescue from error and perdition. Oh! let us entreat, let us pray to our dear and blessed Lord, from whose bitter death and passion alone come grace and eternal salvation, that he will pour forth, in these days of our sympathy with His

sufferings, His most precious and saving streams of life, upon those souls, and change them; bringing them, as fruits of His Redemption, as the peculiar commemoration of what He did in that day when he died for all mankind,—bringing them safe within the precincts of his Church, to the bosom of their dear Mother, who stretches forth her hands to receive them; that so they may take part with us in our paschal joys, and to receive that true and holy communion which is only to be found in that Church of God: which, being not of this world, places her thoughts, her hopes, her aspirations, in that holy heavenly Jerusalem to which she seeks to draw all men.

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